

### Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for surveying a plurality of users with a sequence of questions that is automatically tailored per user to create  
5 a corresponding individualized compensation report, comprising the steps of:  
  
creating with a computer implemented survey engine for each of said users a corresponding user profile containing a tailored sequence of questions and corresponding answers, said tailored sequence of questions directed towards  
10 determination of job information, career information, and potential profile matches responsive of a user profile and one or more affinity groups of said user;  
  
creating with said computer implemented survey engine, at least periodically, said one or more affinity groups for said users responsive of each of said  
15 corresponding user profiles, each of said one or more affinity groups having at least one user profile in an affinity group, said one or more affinity groups being created independent of the order in which said tailored sequence of questions is presented to a user;  
  
20 associating, with said computer implemented survey engine, each user profile with at least one affinity group;  
  
presenting to each user, with a collaborative filtering engine of said computer implemented survey engine, a sequence of questions from a source containing a  
25 plurality of different questions, said sequence of questions and order of each question in said sequence of questions being independently, asynchronously, and dynamically tailored for each and every user on an individual basis responsive to both an answer received from each individual user to a question previously presented to said individual user and a particular affinity group or combination of  
30 affinity groups to which a profile of said individual user is associated;

and

storing said user profile of said each user in a storage associated with said  
5 computer implemented survey engine;

the steps repeated at least once more per user;

based upon said individual's response to said sequence of questions, said  
10 collaborative filtering engine of said computer implemented survey engine  
determining when no additional questions should be presented to said individual;

responsive to an individual's answers to said sequence of questions, said  
collaborative filtering engine of said computer implemented survey engine  
15 capturing profile attributes comprising targeted compensation variables with  
regard to said individual user's profile;

such that a personalized compensation report, which includes job information,  
career information, compensation, and potential profile matches; is generated for  
20 a user responding to said tailored sequence of questions responsive of a request  
from said user to generate said report; and

such that new affinity groups are created by the computer implemented survey  
engine when applicable as additional users respond to respective tailored  
25 sequence of questions.

2. – 3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein at least one particular  
30 subsequent question from said sequence of questions is presented because of at

least one of:

popularity of said subsequent questions within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups;

as a most frequently answered subsequent question within said particular  
5 affinity group or combination of said affinity groups; and

as a most recently answered subsequent question within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein at least one question is  
10 capable of receiving an answer from said user that comprises an open text.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 5, wherein said open text allows said user to add a new answer value for said question.

15 7. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 6, wherein said new answer is used as one of a plurality of possible answers to said question when said question is subsequently posed to a second user.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein a question comprises  
20 at least two possible answers.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 8, wherein said user may select more than one answer to said question.

25 10. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein said at least two possible answers are presented because of at least one of:

popularity of an answer within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups;

as a most frequent answer within said particular affinity group or  
30 combination of said affinity groups; and

as a most recent answer within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein said method further  
5 comprises the step of:

filtering said user profile, wherein said filtering comprises the application of a rules engine that compares said user profile to a set of predefined criteria.

12. (Cancelled)

10 13. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 11, wherein said filtering step further comprises the step of:

modifying without user intervention an answer to said question based on at least one of:

15 predetermined criterion;

at least one filtering rule;

consistency with previously answered questions;

consistency with all answered questions; and

consistency with answers of said particular affinity group or combination of  
20 said affinity groups.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein said modification comprises at least one of omission of said answer, and tagging said user profile as inactive.

25 15. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

periodically creating a new affinity group by associating at least one user profile of said users to said new affinity group.

16. – 17. (Cancelled)

18. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
providing a report.

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19. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 18, wherein generation of said report is constrained by one or more constraints comprising at least one of:  
an attribute of said user profile; and  
a reporting goal.

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20. (Original) The method of Claim 19, wherein said goal comprises at least one of:

a profile attribute value;  
a range of profile attribute values;  
15 a Boolean value reflective of a set of values;  
a Boolean value reflective of a set of non-values;  
a date range;  
a minimum count of matching profiles;  
a maximum count of matching profiles;  
20 a question filter;  
an affinity filter; and  
a match score threshold.

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21. (Original) The method of Claim 19, further comprising the step of:  
25 weighting said constraints to provide a match score.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 19, said step of providing said report comprising the steps of:

matching between at least a matchfield of said goal and a corresponding  
30 matchfield of at least one of an affinity group and a user profile, and

30

generating a match score.

23. (Original) The method of Claim 22, further comprising the step of:  
determining at least one best match from a plurality of possible matches.

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24. (Original) The method of Claim 23, further comprising the step of:  
arranging matches by order of match score, said order being grouped to at  
least two levels of matches, based on said score.

10 25. (Original) The method of Claim 22, said step of matching further comprising  
the step of:  
providing an aggregated score for said matching step; and  
weighting the importance of including said match in said report.

15 26. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 24, said step of matching further  
comprising the step of:  
classifying each match score as one of:  
deterministic to meeting said goal; and  
non-deterministic to meeting said goal.

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27. (Original) The method of Claim 19, wherein said goal is any of:  
a personal goal, wherein said personal goal is a result of a plurality of user  
inputs pertaining to personal aspirations; and  
an external goal, wherein said external goal is a result of a plurality of  
25 arbitrary inputs.

28. (Original) The method of Claim 27, wherein said aggregated information  
comprises statistical information.

30 29. (Original) The method of Claim 27, wherein a report resulting from a personal

goal comprises:

a comparison of a user having said user profile to at least one of:

a plurality of user profiles; and

an affinity group.

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30. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for performing a compensation survey of a plurality of users with a sequence of questions that is automatically tailored per user to create a corresponding individualized compensation report, comprising the steps of:

10        creating, with a computer implemented survey engine, for each of said users a corresponding user profile containing a tailored sequence of questions and corresponding answers, said tailored sequence of questions directed towards determination of job information, career information, and potential profile matches responsive of a user profile and one or more affinity groups of said user;

15        creating, with said computer implemented survey engine, one or more affinity groups for said users responsive of said corresponding user profile, each of said one or more affinity groups having at least one user profile in an affinity group, said one or more affinity groups being created independent of the order in which said tailored sequence of questions is presented to a user;

20        associating, with said computer implemented survey engine, each user profile with at least one existing affinity group;

presenting to each user, with a collaborative filtering engine of said computer implemented survey engine, a sequence of questions from a source containing a plurality of different questions, said sequence of questions and order  
25        of each question in said sequence of questions being independently, asynchronously, and dynamically tailored for each and every user on an individual basis responsive to both an answer received from each individual user to a question previously presented to said individual user and a particular affinity group or combination of affinity groups with which a profile of said individual user is  
30        associated;

and

storing said user profile of said each user in a storage associated with said computer implemented survey engine;

wherein said affinity group comprises at least one of:

5 profession;

compensation;

compensation range;

experience;

experience range;

10 position; and

position range;

the steps repeated at least once more per user;

15 based upon said individual's response to said sequence of questions, said collaborative filtering engine of said computer implemented survey engine determining when no additional questions should be presented to said individual;

20 responsive to an individual's answers to said sequence of questions, said collaborative filtering engine of said computer implemented survey engine capturing profile attributes comprising targeted compensation variables with regard to said individual user's profile;

25 such that a personalized compensation report, which includes job information, career information, compensation, and potential profile matches, is generated for a user responding to said tailored sequence of questions responsive of a request from said user to generate said report; and

30 such that new affinity groups are created by the computer implemented survey engine when applicable as additional users respond to respective tailored

sequence of questions.

31. – 47. (Cancelled)

- 5     48. (Original) The method of Claim 30, further comprising the step of:  
         providing a compensation report.

49. (Original) The method of Claim 48, said compensation report is constrained by  
at least one of:

- 10             an attribute of said user profile; and  
                 a reporting goal.

50. (Cancelled)

- 15     51. (Original) The method of Claim 49, said goal comprising at least one of:  
         a desired compensation;  
         a desired range of compensation;  
         a desired geographic location;  
         a desired firm; and  
20             a desired range of firms.

52. – 56. (Cancelled)

57. (Original) The method of Claim 49, said goal comprising any of:

- 25             a personal goal, wherein said personal goal is a result of a plurality of user  
inputs pertaining to personal aspirations; and  
                 an external goal, wherein said external goal is a result of a plurality of  
arbitrary inputs.

- 30     58. (Original) The method of Claim 57, said personal goal comprising at least one

of:

compensation;  
compensation range;  
salary;  
5 salary range;  
geographic location;  
position; and  
position range.

10 59. (Cancelled)

60. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 30, wherein a report displaying statistical information comprises at least one of:

15 average salary;  
median compensation;  
median salary;  
salary percentile;  
standard deviation;  
trend;  
20 profile count;  
most frequent compensation; and  
most frequent salary.

61. (Cancelled)

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62. (Original) The method of Claim 30, said compensation comprising at least one of:

30 annual salary;  
monthly salary;  
weekly salary;

hourly rate;  
bonus;  
tip;  
benefits; and  
5 vacation time.

63. – 91. (Cancelled)

92. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for surveying a  
10 plurality of users with a sequence of questions that is automatically tailored per  
user to create a corresponding individualized compensation report, comprising the  
steps of:

presenting to each user, with a collaborative filtering engine of a computer  
implemented survey engine, a tailored sequence of questions that is  
15 independently, asynchronous, and dynamically tailored for each and every user of  
the plurality of users on an individual basis from a source containing a plurality of  
different questions, each user's answer to each of said sequence of questions  
being stored in a corresponding user profile, said tailored sequence of questions  
directed towards determination of job information, career information, and  
20 potential profile matches responsive of a user profile and one or more affinity  
groups of said user;

determining periodically, with said computer implemented survey engine,  
an affinity of each of said corresponding user profile to compensation within one  
or more affinity groups, wherein each affinity group comprises a plurality of user  
25 profiles and wherein a user profile corresponds to at least one affinity group, said  
one or more affinity groups being created independent of the order in which said  
tailored sequence of questions is presented to a user;

receiving answers from each user;

filtering said user profile, with a collaborative filtering engine of said  
30 computer implemented survey engine, wherein said filtering further comprises the

application of a rules engine that compares said user profile to a set of predefined criteria;

modifying an answer if it is inconsistent with at least one of:

said user profile; and

5                   said affinity group;

wherein determining an appropriate next question for said sequence of questions to be presented to said user on an individual basis, said appropriate next question, and a specific order in which said sequence of said questions are presented to each said user, being determined on an individual, user-by-user basis based on at least a particular affinity group or combination of affinity groups to which said user profile is associated and an answer to a previously presented question; and

15                   based upon said individual's response to said sequence of questions, said collaborative filtering engine of said computer implemented survey engine determining when no additional questions should be presented to said individual;

20                   responsive to an individual's answers to said sequence of questions, said collaborative filtering engine of said computer implemented survey engine capturing profile attributes comprising targeted compensation variables with regard to said individual user's profile;

25                   such that a personalized compensation report, which includes job information, career information, compensation, and potential profile matches, is generated for a user responding to said tailored sequence of questions responsive of a request from said user to generate said report; and

30                   such that new affinity groups are created by the computer implemented survey engine when applicable as additional users respond to respective tailored sequence of questions.

93. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 92, further comprising the steps of:

at least periodically checking all user profiles; and

5 attempting to generate at least an affinity group, wherein said affinity group comprises at least a user profile.

94. – 95. (Cancelled)

10 96. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 92, wherein a next question in said sequence of questions is determined based on at least one of:

popularity of said question within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups;

15 a most frequently answered question within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups; and

a most recently answered question within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups; and

in relation to said question.

20 97. (Original) The method of Claim 94, further comprising the step of:

querying any of a database of a plurality of user profiles and a database of a plurality of affinity groups for a statistical report.

25 98. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 97, wherein said statistical report comprises at least one of:

average salary;

median compensation;

median salary;

salary percentile;

30 standard deviation;

trend;  
profile count;  
most frequent compensation; and  
most frequent salary.

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99.– 110. (Cancelled)